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Rūzbihān Abū Muḥammad ibn Abī Naṣr al-Baqlī al-Fasawī (522/1128–606/1209) was one of the most significant mystics of twelfth-century Iran. Best known today as the author of ‘*Abhar al-‘Āshiqān*¹ (The Jasmine of Lovers) and *Sharḥ-i Shathīyāt*² (An Exegesis of Ecstatic Sayings), Rūzbihān also wrote on a range of subjects including *tafsīr* (interpretation), *ḥadīth* (traditions), *fiqh* (Islamic law), and commentary on the *Qur’ān*. The present study focuses on Rūzbihān’s autobiography *Kashf al-Asrār wa Mukāshafāt al-Anwār* (*The Unveiling of Secrets and Disclosures of the Lights*).³ While *Kashf al-Asrār* has received serious scholarly attention in the past few years, this is the first critical edition of the unpublished manuscript of the autobiography.

In his writings Rūzbihān provides detailed descriptions of the realities of the unseen (*ghayb*). His vivid portrayal of the unseen is most meaningfully conveyed in his autobiography, *Kashf al-Asrār*, which he began writing at age fifty-five. In this text, Rūzbihān describes himself in terms of his daily visions (*mukāshafāt*) of God’s manifestations of might and beauty (*jalāl wa jamāl*) and other mysteries. Through these visions, Rūzbihān describes how the visible and the unseen worlds are interconnected as simultaneously present realities. Rūzbihān explains that he has observed these visions in both wakefulness and in sleep.

Rūzbihān’s visionary autobiography is an exemplary text in the discussion on the self and the unseen. Written in Arabic, with

¹ Rūzbihān Baqlī, ‘*Abhar al-‘Āshiqān*, ed. Henry Corbin and Muḥammad Mu’īn (Tehran: Ketābkhane-ye Manūchehri, 1987).

² Rūzbihān Baqlī, *Sharḥ-i Shathīyāt*, ed. Henry Corbin (Tehran: Tahūrī, 1995).

³ Muḥammad Taqī Dānish Pazhūh, *Rūzbihān-Nāmih* (Tehran: Chāpkhāne-ye Bahman, 1969) 42–43. Rūzbihān’s autobiography is also referred to as *Al-Anwār fī Kashf al-Asrār* or *Kashf al-Asrār*.

the exception of a few words and phrases in Persian, *Kashf al-Asrār* is the record of the visionary events that constitute the life of the author in relationship with the unseen world (*‘ālam al-ghayb*). It describes how Rūzbihān is in contact with the unseen and how he participates in its mysteries. *Kashf al-Asrār* is more complex than a personal *histoire* with a focus on the story/history of Rūzbihān's life; this autobiography breaks the confines of chronology and sequential narratives that are expected in autobiographies. In this respect, *Kashf al-Asrār* comes close to Buddhist biographies and autobiographies where the center of action is the inner life of the narrator in connection with realms of reality that defy the temporal and spatial perceptions of reality as we know it.

A. RŪZBIHĀN'S LIFE AND WORKS

In addition to Rūzbihān's autobiography, there are other important biographical records of Rūzbihān's life and writings. These include Jāmī's *Nafahāt al-Uns min Ḥaḍarāt al-Quds*, and *Rūḥ al-Jinān fī Sīrat al-Shaykh Rūzbihān* and *Tuhfat Ahl al-'Irfān fī Dhikr Sayyid al-Aqtāb Rūzbihān* (700/1300).⁴ The authors of the two latter biographies are Rūzbihān's great-grandsons,⁵ Sharaf al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Ṣadr al-Dīn Abī Muḥammad Rūzbihān Thānī (d. 1300) and his brother 'Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Ṣadr al-Dīn Abī Muḥammad Rūzbihān Thānī (d. 1305). Sharaf al-Dīn, the author of *Tuhfat Ahl al-'Irfān* begins his account by stating that Rūzbihān was born in Fasā, a province of Shīrāz in Fārs in the south of Iran—Fasā and Basā, the Arabicized versions of Pasā, are all used in referring to Rūzbihān's natal town.⁶ Sharaf al-Dīn gives Rūzbihān's lineage as Daylamite—a renowned tribe that had resided in Fārs for several centuries.⁷ Rūzbihān lived during the reign of the Saljūq dynasty, when the Salghurids, one of their vassal dynasties, held dominance over Fārs. The Salghurids' capital was in Shīrāz, where Rūzbihān lived most of his life. Rūzbihān deliv-

⁴ 'Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Ṣadr al-Dīn Abī Muḥammad Rūzbihān Thānī, *Rūḥ al-Jinān fī Sīrat al-Shaykh Rūzbihān*, and Sharaf al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Ṣadr al-Dīn Abī Muḥammad Rūzbihān Thānī, *Tuhfat Ahl al-'Irfān fī Dhikr Sayyid al-Aqtāb Rūzbihān*, in Dānish Pazhūh, *Rūzbihān Nāme*. Henceforth referred to as Ṣadr al-Dīn, *Rūḥ al-Jinān*, and Sharaf al-Dīn, *Tuhfat Ahl al-'Irfān*.

⁵ They were the sons of Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Fakhr al-Dīn Aḥmad Rūzbihān Thānī (d. 1286), the son of Rūzbihān's younger son Fakhr al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Rūzbihān (d. 1247).

⁶ W. Ivanov, "A Biography of Ruzbihan al-Baqli," in *Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, N.S. XXIV (1928) 353: "Shaykh—or, as it is still pronounced in Shirāz—Shaykh Abū Muḥammad Rūzbihān b. Abī Naṣr al-Baqli al-Basā'i (as his name is written on his tomb, not al-Basāsīrī, as one would expect), i.e., of Fasā, died at an advanced age in Shiraz, in the beginning of Muḥarram 606 A.H./the middle of July 1209 A.D."

⁷ The latter had resided in this region from the time of the Buyids (320-447 A.H.). See Sharaf al-Dīn, *Tuhfat Ahl al-'Irfān*, 276.

ered sermons at the town's famous 'Atāq mosque and enjoyed a large following in Shīrāz among the townfolk as well as some of the local rulers such as *Atābak Sa'īd Abū Bakr Sa'd ibn Zangī* who is often discussed in Rūzbihān's hagiographies.⁸ This period witnessed much political unrest and rivalry among princes. The nobles of the town frequented Rūzbihān's hospice (*ribāṭ*) and at times extended their political feuds beyond its walls.⁹ Rūzbihān did not pay much heed to them. In fact, he ends *Kashf al-Asrār* with a supplication to God to save him from dealing with these princes and their courts.¹⁰ The hagiography on Rūzbihān, particularly *Rūh al-Jinān* and *Tuhfat Ahl al-'Irfān*, provides enough evidence to indicate that the rulers of Shirāz were on good terms with the shaykh and that some held him in high esteem and sought his blessing and advice.¹¹

According to Jāmī's *Nafaḥāt al-Uns min Ḥadarāt al-Quds*, Rūzbihān received his initiatory sufi robe (*khirqā*) from Sirāj al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Khalīfa ibn 'Abd al-Salām. This information is confirmed by Rūzbihān's other hagiographers. In his autobiography, *Kashf al-Asrār*, Rūzbihān remembers another mystic, Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Wafā ibn Khalīl al-Fasā'ī, as his first teacher and pays homage to him.¹² In addition to al-Fasā'ī, Rūzbihān mentions other mystics who appear in his visions. These include his contemporaries, as well as mystics of earlier generations, going back to the time of the Prophet. Jāmī, as well as others, describe Rūzbihān as a well-travelled man who had visited Iraq, the Ḥijāz, Egypt, and Syria.¹³ It has been said that in Alexandria,

⁸ *Ibid.*, 53, 64.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁰ *Kashf al-Asrār*, section 209.

¹¹ Sharaf al-Dīn, *Tuhfat Ahl al-'Irfān*, 53, 64–65. Cf. Ṣadr al-Dīn, *Rūh al-Jinān*, 224–6.

¹² *Kashf al-Asrār*, section 13.

¹³ Massignon argues that while Rūzbihān's travels to Iraq, Hijaz, and Syria can be confirmed, his trip to Alexandria with Abū al-Najīb al-Suhrawardī (d. 563) to participate in lectures on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukharī is open to dispute. L. Massignon, "La Vie et les œuvres de Rūzbehān Baqlī," in *Studia Orientalia Ioanni Pedersen . . . Dicata* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1953) 239–40.

Rūzbihān, along with Abū al-Najīb al-Suhrawardī, attended lectures on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukharī. The author of *Rūḥ al-Jinān* relates that on the way to Mecca, Rūzbihān and Abū al-Najīb al-Suhrawardī met in Medina and became engaged in a heated discussion on mysticism and the paths to God. Abū al-Najīb argued for the ascetic path, while Rūzbihān argued for intoxication and ecstasy. They departed without having reached an agreement. Three days later, Abū al-Najīb had a vision of the angel Gabriel, who described Rūzbihān as the supreme mystic of his time. When in Medina, Abū al-Najīb visited Rūzbihān and paid him homage.¹⁴

Towards the end of his life, Rūzbihān was afflicted with paralysis. One of his disciples, who had recently travelled to Egypt, had brought him a medicinal oil (*balasān*) for his ailment. Rūzbihān refused the medicine, calling his condition an expression of the bonds of love between God and him. He then asked his disciple to rub the oil on a sick dog that was lying at their gate.¹⁵ Rūzbihān died in Shīrāz, in the beginning of Muḥarram 606 A.H./the middle of July 1209 A.D. Before his departure from this world, he is said to have predicted the death of Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan al-Kardawīya and Shaykh ‘Alī al-Sirāj, his companion and brother-in-law; they died as predicted.¹⁶ Rūzbihān is buried in Shīrāz.

¹⁴ Ṣadr al-Dīn, *Rūḥ al-Jinān*, 197–8. Cf. Rūzbihān Baqlī, ‘*Abhar al-‘Āshiqīn*.

¹⁵ Sharaf al-Dīn, *Tuḥfat Ahl al-‘Irfān*, 60.

¹⁶ Mu‘īn al-Dīn Abū al-Qāsim Junayd Shīrāzī, *Shadd al-Izār fī Haṭṭ al-Awzār ‘an Zuwwār al-Mazār*, ed. Muḥammad Qazvīnī and ‘Abbās Iqbāl (Tehran: Majles, 1328) section 177, p. 254:

الشيخ على السراج
العارف المحقق كان خال اولاد الشيخ روزبهان ذا حال رفيع وشأن عظيم
(ورق ١١٥) ولما مرض الشيخ روزبهان آخر عمره دخل عليه الشيخ على مع
الشيخ ابي الحسن المعروف بكردويه فاقبل الشيخ روزبهان عليهما وقال
تعاليا نخرج من قيد هذه الحياة الفانية الجسمانية لنبقى بالحياة الأبدية
الروحانية فأجاب كل منهما بالقبول فقال الشيخ انا اتقدم وانت يا على
بعد مضى شهر وانت يا ابا الحسن بعد خمسة عشر يوماً فتواعدوا وتوفي
الشيخ من الغد والأخرا ن بعد مضى ما وعد ووفاته في منتصف صفر من
السنة رحمة الله عليهم.

B. KASHF AL-ASRĀR

The present edition of *Kashf al-Asrār* is the first complete edition based on the two complete manuscripts of the autobiography: one at the library of *Āstān-i Quds-i Razavī* in Mashhad and another at Massignon's private library in Paris.²⁶ A third manuscript at the *Sobranie Vostochnikh Rukopisei Akademii Nauk Uzbekskoi SSR, Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk Uz. S.S.R* (Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic Academy of Sciences: Collection of Oriental Manuscripts) in Tashkent, copied by Ṭayfūr ibn Ḥājji Kamāl Yazdī, has been erroneously catalogued as Rūzbihān's *Kashf al-Asrār*.²⁷ The two manuscripts that I have used in this research were made available to me by Carl Ernst, who had used them in his English translation of *Kashf al-Asrār, The Unveiling of Secrets: Diary of a Sufi Master*.²⁸ The Mashhad manuscript is dated 1064 A.H.²⁹ This manuscript proved less reliable than the Paris manuscript, which therefore has been the primary witness to the text. Massignon refers to the manuscript in his possession as *Kashf al-Asrār wa Mukāshafāt al-Anwār* and describes it as a dense and compact manuscript in 25 folios, in the album format, dated 655 A.H.³⁰ Massignon says the following about acquiring the manuscript:

²⁶ Mashhad 829 (catalog iv, 220, no. 931), dated 1064/1654. Massignon, Paris, dated 665/1266.

²⁷ From a personal correspondence with Carl Ernst on June 3, 2003. *Al-Anwār fī Kashf al-Asrār*, Tashkent 2578/2, dated *Muharram* 789 A.H. / 1387 A.D. A. A. Semenova, *Sobranie Vostochnikh Rukopisei Akademii Nauk Uzbekskoi SSR* (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk Uz. S.S.R., 1965), III, 176, no. 2188. Carl Ernst and Paul Ballanfāt have examined this manuscript. They have concluded this manuscript is unrelated to *Kashf al-Asrār*. Moreover, its title must be a conjecture of the cataloguer since the first page of the manuscript is missing altogether.

²⁸ Ruzbihan Baqli, *The Unveiling of Secrets: Diary of a Sufi Master*, tr. Carl Ernst (Chapel Hill: Parvardigar Press, 1997).

²⁹ ۱.۶۴/۱ مورخ اواخر {۹۳۱ ش ۲۲۰: ۴} ۸۲۹ ش

³⁰ Massignon, *La Vie et les œuvres de Rūzbehān Baqlī*, 242.

Et nous avons retrouvé l'autobiographie du Baqlī dans son "kashf al-asrār" (25 feuillets, vers la fin du majmū' ms., daté de jum. 2 665/1266, contenant le Mantiq; ms. que nous avait signalé le regretté Hasan Bader en 1930, et qui, après dix années de pourparlers; nous a été cédé par les héritiers de Sardar ol Afzel, grâce à l'amicale ténacité de Mme Y. André Godard).³¹

The Massignon manuscript, which we have cited as the Paris manuscript, predates the Mashhad manuscript by four hundred years and is the more reliable of the two. In fact, we are convinced that the Mashhad manuscript was copied from the Paris manuscript. This is apparent from comparison of the errors that appear in the manuscripts: the grammatical and the spelling errors that appear in the Paris manuscript are found verbatim in the Mashhad manuscript. Accordingly, the present edition of *Kashf al-Asrār* is based on the Paris manuscript as the primary witness; the Mashhad manuscript is valuable in being more clearly written and more legible than the Paris manuscript.

Since in effect there is only one authoritative witness to the text, we have edited cautiously, presenting the manuscript reading rather than amending or regularizing. Rūzbihān's Arabic, though fluent, occasionally is ungrammatical: the definite article is sometimes omitted where Arabic grammar or usage demands it; adjectives and verbs sometimes do not agree with the nouns they qualify; and the spelling of words containing *hamza* is inconsistent. Some of these features may go back to Rūzbihān himself; others may have been introduced into the text by copyists. In any case, we have resisted the urge to regularize in order to present a text that is modern in appearance. While the reader may sometimes find the resulting text difficult, one can see how Arabic was handled in a Persian milieu at the time of our author and shortly thereafter. Not unexpectedly, there are points at which the reading of the Paris manuscript can only be conjectured, either because the hand is unclear or because diacritical dots (*i'jām*) have been omitted. We have indicated

³¹ Ibid., 236–7.

these points in the textual notes. The Mashhad manuscript rarely solves these difficulties.

In 1972, Henry Corbin's *En Islam iranien, aspects spirituels et philosophiques* provided a detailed analysis of Rūzbihān's autobiography, which he refers to as Rūzbihān's *journal*.³² Corbin's reading is focused on the major themes, leitmotives, and images that recur throughout the autobiography. The section, *Diarium Spirituale*, includes a French translation of selected passages from *Kashf al-Asrār*.³³ Paul Ballanfat's dissertation, *Aspects de la pensée de Rūzbihān Baqlī: soufi à Shīrāz au XIIème siècle*, provides a French translation of the manuscript.³⁴ A valuable English source on *Kashf al-Asrār* is Carl Ernst's aforementioned English translation of the manuscript, *Kashf al-Asrār, The Unveiling of Secrets: Diary of a Sufi Master*. This work complements Ernst's earlier analytical work on this subject, *Ruzbihan Baqli: Mysticism and the Rhetoric of Sainthood in Persian Sufism*.³⁵

³² Henry Corbin, *En Islam Iranien*, vol. 3, "Les Fidèles d'amour, Shī'isme et soufisme," (Paris: Gallimard, 1972) 9–83.

³³ *Ibid.*, 45–64.

³⁴ Ruzbihan Baqli, *Le Dévoilement des secrets: Journal spirituel de Rūzbehān Baqlī*, trans. Paul Ballanfat (Paris: Le Seuil, 1997).

³⁵ Carl Ernst, *Ruzbihan Baqli: Mysticism and the Rhetoric of Sainthood in Persian Sufism*.